

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following is a marked-up version of the claims with the language that is underlined ("____") being added and the language that contains strikethrough ("—") being deleted:

1. (Currently Amended) A master set top terminal (STT), comprising:
 - a first tuner tuning a television signal from a received multiplexed signal, ~~into~~ to a first tuned television signal;
 - a second tuner tuning the television signal from the received multiplexed signal, into second tuned television signal;
 - an encoder supporting a plurality of encoding formats and coupled to the first tuner and receiving the first tuned television signal and digitally encoding the first tuned television signal having one of the encoding formats into an encoded signal having another one of the encoding formats, and further configured to operate in accordance with a parameter describing quality of the encoded signal, and further configured to change the parameter after a time period such that the quality of the encoded signal is improved;
 - a transmitter coupled to the encoder and transmitting the encoded signal to a remote STT to be displayed on a first viewing device;
 - a receiver receiving a control signal from the remote STT corresponding to a user input;
 - a controller coupled to the receiver and configured to accept the control signal from the receiver and instruct the first tuner to ~~change the tuned~~ tune to a second tuned television signal in response thereto, such that the transmitter transmits ~~a changed encoded~~ an encoding of the second tuned television signal to the remote STT for display on the first viewing device; and
 - a Radio Frequency (RF) driver coupled to the second tuner, the RF driver configured to facilitate transmission of an independent signal to a second viewing device, the second viewing device being different than the first viewing device.

2. (Previously Presented) The master STT as defined in claim 1, wherein the changed encoded signal is displayed at the first viewing device within two seconds from the remote STT receiving the user input.

3. (Previously Presented) The master STT as defined in claim 2, wherein the changed encoded signal is displayed at the first viewing device within a half-second from the remote STT receiving the user input.

4. (Previously Presented) The master STT as defined in claim 3, wherein the transmitter and receiver operate according to a wireline standard selected from the group consisting of HomePlug and HomePNA.

5. (Previously Presented) The master STT as defined in claim 2, wherein the transmitter and receiver operate according to a wireless standard selected from the group consisting of IEEE 802.11a, IEEE 802.11b, IEEE 802.11g, Bluetooth 2.0, HomeRF 2.0, HiperLAN/2, and Ultra-Wideband standards.

6. (Previously Presented) The master STT as defined in claim 5, wherein the video encoder uses a form of digital compression.

7. (Previously Presented) The master STT as defined in claim 6, wherein the video encoder is selected from the group consisting of Microsoft NetMeeting, Windows Media Player, and Real Player.

8. (Previously Presented) The master STT as defined in claim 6, wherein the low latency between the reception of the control signal and the transmission of the changed television signal is achieved by immediately encoding and transmitting a lower quality video signal.

9. (Previously Presented) The master STT as defined in claim 8, wherein a higher quality video signal is transmitted after a period during which the lower quality video signal is transmitted.

10. (Previously Presented) The master STT as defined in claim 9, wherein the period of lower quality video transmission allows the higher quality video signal to be encoded for transmission.

11. (Previously Presented) The master STT as defined in claim 9, wherein the encoding format is at least one of H.263, H.323, H.324, MPEG-1, low bit-rate MPEG-2, MPEG-2 or MPEG-4.

12. (Previously Presented) The master STT as defined in claim 11, wherein the encoding format is low bit-rate MPEG-2 and at least one of H.323, H.324, MPEG-1, MPEG-2 or MPEG-4.

13. (Previously Presented) The master STT as defined in claim 11, wherein the encoding format is H.263 and at least one of H.323, H.324, MPEG-1, MPEG-2 or MPEG-4.

14. (Previously Presented) The master STT as defined in claim 11, wherein the transmitted signal includes an encoding parameter enabling the remote STT to decode the transmitted signal using multiple decoding algorithms according to the encoding parameters.

15. (Previously Presented) The master STT as defined in claim 1, wherein the received multiplexed signal further comprises a program information component, and the master STT further comprises a program guide generator, receiving the program information from the received multiplexed signal and generating a program guide therefrom that can be transmitted by the transmitter upon a user request for the program guide at the remote STT.

16. (Previously Presented) The master STT as defined in claim 1, wherein the master STT further comprises an internet connection, and the transmitter is capable of transmitting content derived from the internet connection to the remote STT.

17-21. (Cancelled)

22-51. (Cancelled)

52-63. (Cancelled)

64-113. (Cancelled)

114. (New) A master set-top terminal (STT) comprising:

a tuner configured to tune a television signal from a received multiplex signal, into a first tuned television signal;

an encoder supporting a plurality of encoding formats and configured to digitally encode the tuned television signal having one of the encoding formats into an encoded signal having another one of the encoding formats, and further configured to operate in accordance with a parameter describing quality of the encoded signal, and further configured to change the parameter after a time period such that the quality of the encoded signal is improved;

a transmitter configured to transmit the encoded signal to a remote STT to be displayed on a viewing device;

a controller configured to receive a control signal corresponding to a user input at the STT and configured to instruct the tuner to tune into a second tuned television signal in response thereto, such that the transmitter transmits an encoding of the second tuned television signal to the remote STT for display on the viewing device.

115. (New) The master STT of claim 114, wherein the transmitter is further configured to transmit a decode parameter indicative of the changed parameter.

116. (New) The master STT of claim 115, wherein the decode parameter is conveyed in a packet header.

117. (New) The master STT of claim 115, wherein the decode parameter is conveyed in an out-of-band data packet.

118. (New) The master STT of claim 115, wherein transmission of the decode parameter is preceded by transmission of a predetermined bit pattern.

119. (New) The master STT of claim 114, wherein the transmitter is further configured to transmit the encoded signal simultaneously with the tuned television signal having one of the encoding formats.

120. (New) The master STT of claim 114, wherein the one of the encoding formats and the another one of the encoding formats differ in bit rate.

121. (New) The master STT of claim 114, wherein the one of the encoding formats and the another one of the encoding formats conform to a common standard but differ in bit rate.

122. (New) The master STT of claim 114, wherein the encoder is configured to operate in accordance with a parameter describing quality of the encoded signal and wherein the encoder is further configured to change the parameter after a time period such that the quality of the encoded signal is improved.

123. (New) The master STT of claim 114, wherein the encoder is configured to operate in accordance with a parameter describing quality of the encoded signal and wherein the encoder is further configured to maintain the parameter over time to maintain the quality of the encoded signal.

124. (New) The master STT of claim 114, wherein the television signal is an analog modulated signal.

125. (New) The master STT of claim 114, wherein the television signal is a digitally modulated signal.

126. (New) The master STT of claim 114, wherein the transmitter and the controller are configured to operate according to a wireline standard selected from the group consisting of HomePlug and HomePNA.

127. (New) The master STT of claim 114, wherein the transmitter and the controller are configured to operate according to a wireless standard selected from the group consisting of IEEE 802.11a, IEEE 802.11b, IEEE 802.11g, Bluetooth 2.0, HomeRF 2.0, HiperLAN/2, and Ultra-Wideband standards.

128. (New) The master STT of claim 114, wherein the plurality of encoding formats includes at least one of H.263, H.323, H.324, MPEG-1, low bit-rate MPEG-2, MPEG-2 or MPEG-4.

129. (New) The master STT of claim 114, wherein the plurality of encoding formats includes low bit-rate MPEG-2 and at least one of H.323, H.324, MPEG-1, MPEG-2 or MPEG-4.

130. (New) The master STT of claim 114, wherein the plurality of encoding formats includes H.263 and at least one of H.323, H.324, MPEG-1, MPEG-2 or MPEG-4.

131. (New) A method implemented in a set-top terminal (STT), the method comprising:

tuning a television signal from a received multiplex signal, into a tuned television signal;

digitally encoding the tuned television signal having one of a plurality of encoding formats into an encoded signal having another one of the encoding formats, in accordance with a parameter describing quality of the encoded signal;

transmitting the encoded signal to a remote STT to be displayed on a viewing device;

receiving a control signal corresponding to a user input at the STT;

responsive to the received control signal, instructing the first tuner to change the tuned television signal; and

responsive to the change, transmitting a changed encoded signal to the remote STT for display on the viewing device.

132. (New) The method of claim 131, further comprising:

transmitting a decode parameter indicative of the changed parameter.

133. (New) The method of claim 132, wherein the decode parameter is conveyed in a packet header.

134. (New) The method of claim 132, wherein the decode parameter is conveyed in an out-of-band data packet.

135. (New) The method of claim 132, further comprising:

transmitting a predetermined bit pattern before the transmitting the decode parameter.

136. (New) The method of claim 131, further comprising:

transmitting the encoded signal simultaneously with the tuned television signal having one of the encoding formats.

137. (New) The method of claim 131, wherein the one of the encoding formats and the another one of the encoding formats differ in bit rate.

138. (New) The method of claim 131, wherein the one of the encoding formats and the another one of the encoding formats conform to a common standard but differ in bit rate.

139. (New) The method of claim 131, wherein the encoding operates in accordance with a parameter describing quality of the encoded signal, the method further comprising:

changing the parameter after a time period such that the quality of the encoded signal is improved.

140. (New) The method of claim 131, wherein the encoding operates in accordance with a parameter describing quality of the encoded signal, the method further comprising:

maintaining the parameter over time such that the quality of the encoded signal is maintained.

141. (New) The method of claim 131, wherein the television signal is an analog modulated signal.

142. (New) The method of claim 131, wherein the television signal is a digitally modulated signal.

143. (New) The method of claim 131, wherein the transmitting and the receiving operate according to a wireline standard selected from the group consisting of HomePlug and HomePNA.

144. (New) The method of claim 131, wherein the transmitting and the receiving operate according to a wireless standard selected from the group consisting of IEEE 802.11a, IEEE 802.11b, IEEE 802.11g, Bluetooth 2.0, HomeRF 2.0, HiperLAN/2, and Ultra-Wideband standards.

145. (New) The method of claim 131, wherein the plurality of encoding formats includes at least one of H.263, H.323, H.324, MPEG-1, low bit-rate MPEG-2, MPEG-2 or MPEG-4.

146. (New) The method of claim 131, wherein the plurality of encoding formats includes low bit-rate MPEG-2 and at least one of H.323, H.324, MPEG-1, MPEG-2 or MPEG-4.

147. (New) The method of claim 131, wherein the plurality of encoding formats includes H.263 and at least one of H.323, H.324, MPEG-1, MPEG-2 or MPEG-4.

148. (New) A computer readable medium encoded with computer executable instructions operable to:

tune a television signal from a received multiplex signal, into a tuned television signal;
digitally encode the tuned television signal having one of a plurality of encoding formats into an encoded signal having another one of the encoding formats, in accordance with a parameter describing quality of the encoded signal;

change the parameter after a time period such that the quality of the encoded signal is improved; and

transmit the encoded signal to a remote STT to be displayed on a viewing device;
receive a control signal corresponding to a user input at the STT;
responsive to the received control signal, instruct the first tuner to change the tuned television signal; and

responsive to the change, transmit a changed encoded signal to the remote STT for display on the viewing device.

149. (New) The computer readable medium of claim 148, the computer readable medium further encoded with executable instructions operable to:

transmit a decode parameter indicative of the changed parameter.

150. (New) The computer readable medium of claim 132, wherein the decode parameter is conveyed in a packet header.

151. (New) The computer readable medium of claim 132, wherein the decode parameter is conveyed in an out-of-band data packet.

152. (New) The computer readable medium of claim 148, the computer readable medium further encoded with executable instructions operable to:

transmit a predetermined bit pattern before the transmitting the decode parameter.

153. (New) The computer readable medium of claim 148, the computer readable medium further encoded with executable instructions operable to:

transmit the encoded signal simultaneously with the tuned television signal having one of the encoding formats.

154. (New) The computer readable medium of claim 148, wherein the one of the encoding formats and the another one of the encoding formats differ in bit rate.

155. (New) The computer readable medium of claim 148, wherein the one of the encoding formats and the another one of the encoding formats conform to a common standard but differ in bit rate.

156. (New) The computer readable medium of claim 148, wherein the encoding operates in accordance with a parameter describing quality of the encoded signal, the computer readable medium further encoded with executable instructions operable to:

changing the parameter after a time period such that the quality of the encoded signal is improved.

157. (New) The computer readable medium of claim 148, wherein the encoding operates in accordance with a parameter describing quality of the encoded signal, the computer readable medium further encoded with executable instructions operable to:

maintaining the parameter over time such that the quality of the encoded signal is maintained.

158. (New) The computer readable medium of claim 148, wherein the television signal is an analog modulated signal.

159. (New) The computer readable medium of claim 148, wherein the television signal is a digitally modulated signal.

160. (New) The computer readable medium of claim 148, wherein the transmitting and the receiving operate according to a wireline standard selected from the group consisting of HomePlug and HomePNA.

161. (New) The computer readable medium of claim 148, wherein the transmitting and the receiving operate according to a wireless standard selected from the group consisting of IEEE 802.11a, IEEE 802.11b, IEEE 802.11g, Bluetooth 2.0, HomeRF 2.0, HiperLAN/2, and Ultra-Wideband standards.

162. (New) The computer readable medium of claim 148, wherein the plurality of encoding formats includes at least one of H.263, H.323, H.324, MPEG-1, low bit-rate MPEG-2, MPEG-2 or MPEG-4.

163. (New) The computer readable medium of claim 148, wherein the plurality of encoding formats includes low bit-rate MPEG-2 and at least one of H.323, H.324, MPEG-1, MPEG-2 or MPEG-4.

164. (New) The computer readable medium of claim 148, wherein the plurality of encoding formats includes H.263 and at least one of H.323, H.324, MPEG-1, MPEG-2 or MPEG-4.